

# Story of Paul Jones: Our First Naval Hero.

By Augustus C. Buell.

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## CHAPTER VII.

THE BON HOMME RICHARD, HER OFFICERS AND CREW—ESTIMATE OF HER RATING—PAUL JONES'S AMBITION. MEETING WITH THE SERAPIS, A CRACK SHIP OF THE ENGLISH NAVY. THE BATTLE BEGUN.

Jones, who had commissions or warrants executed in blank for all subordinate officers and absolute power to appoint or remove, made Richard Dale First Lieutenant, and replaced more than half of his original warrant and petty officers with the new men.

The reinforcement included, besides Lieut. Dale, such men as Samuel Stacey, of New Hampshire, whom he commissioned as Master; John Mayrant, of South Carolina; John Louis White, of Philadelphia; Nathaniel Fanning, of Massachusetts; Thomas Potter, of Baltimore, and John West Southwaite, of Savannah, whom he warranted as Midshipman; Henry Gratton Gardner, of Nantucket, whom he rated First Quarter Gunner, or Gunner's Mate.

Outboard profile and stern perspective of the ship, showing contour of hull and arrangement of battery. She was a full square-rigged ship. At the time of her capture she was new, having been built at Chatham Dockyard in 1778, and received her first commission, as convoy to the Baltic merchant fleet, in May, 1779. The picture is a rough tracing from the Atlas of Plans accompanying Charnock's Naval Architecture, London, 1788.

(and soon afterward Acting Gunner); John C. Robinson, of Philadelphia, Boatwain; together with about a dozen or more whom he rated petty officers of the more important stations.

What the Richard did with these genuine American sailors aboard is a matter of history. What her fate might have been without them can—fortunately perhaps—never be known.

Thus refitted, returned and re-organized crew, the Richard may have been the fair equivalent of a 40-gun frigate under the rating of that time, including the metal of her 18-pounder battery in the stern. Built at Nantes in 1766, she was now an old ship, having made several voyages to Pondicherry as an East India

Her principal dimensions were:  
Length on main deck.....152 feet.  
Length of keel for tonnage.....128 feet.  
Extreme breadth.....40 feet.  
Depth of hold.....19 feet.  
Burden (French measurement).....908 tons.

Built for carrying passengers and heavy cargo, she was roomy and comfortable between decks, and had plenty of stowage for stores, provisions, water, and ammunition. She was as good a sailer as the average of English frigates, except when extremely close hauled, on which point of sailing she was dull and much given to leeway.

The Alliance, which was notably the fastest ship of her rate in the world at that time, could sail all around the Richard in working to windward.

JONES'S ASPIRATIONS.  
Under date of Aug. 9, 1779, five days before sailing, Jones wrote to his friend, Mr. Hewes, also sending copies of the letter to Gen. Washington, Dr. Franklin and La Fayette. After some account of his embarrassments in dealing with le Roy de Chaulmont, he says:

"In spite of these drawbacks and difficulties I can now see my way clear to a real cruise. I hope to realize in it some of my ambitions toward promoting the reputation of America on the sea."

"The capture of the Drake, small as the ships were and unimportant as the result was in regard to the operations of the war, still produces a wonderful moral effect upon the continent of Europe and alarmed the English more than they have been alarmed in many years."

"Now, with the force I have, ill-assorted and hampered as it is by untoward conditions, I can, if fortune favors me with the opportunity, fight a much more impressive battle."

"With this in view I should not deem it a misfortune if I fell in with a ship of the enemy superior enough to make the taking of her an event of the day the ship sailed. Mindful of all I have said and written to you about the great naval benefit which would accrue to our cause from a striking naval success, I am, therefore, desirous to cope with the English on the element they have so long ruled. I shall welcome the approach of such a ship."

"In all sincerity, my friend—best of friends, I assure you that if such opportunity shall come to me, I will improve it in a manner that neither country will soon forget."

"I might have a better ship, and my crew would of course be better if they were all Americans. But I am truly grateful for ship and crew as they are, and if I should fail and fall, I wish this writing to witness that I take all the blame upon myself!"

## A NON-SECTIONAL CREW.

The roster called for 241 officers, petty officers, seamen and boys, and 132 marines; 273 all hands the day the ship sailed. In view of the imperishable renown these men won, it may not be uninteresting to the present generation to know from what parts of the Union the 425 Americans of the Richard's crew came. The original roster, a copy of which I have, gives the States or ports from which they hailed, as follows:

Officers.	Men.
Philadelphia.....6	27
Massachusetts.....3	23
New Hampshire.....3	23
Baltimore.....1	11
Virginia.....4	21
South Carolina.....2	8
Georgia.....1	3

If men actually belonging to other States or ports were on board they did not hail from their proper homes, the above being all that are mentioned in the roster. It is worthy of note that in the crew of the Richard, many other markers of Revolutionary history. Philadelphia took the lead both in numbers and rank of her citizens on board.

## THE OTHER VESSELS.

For the other vessels it suffices to remark that the Alliance was officered and manned as follows:

Captain, Pierre Landais, France; First

heavy for rating as frigates proper and not heavy enough for the line-of-battle.

## DIMENSIONS OF SERAPIS.

The dimensions of the Serapis were as follows:  
Length on the gun-deck.....146 feet.  
Length of keel for tonnage.....122 feet.  
Extreme breadth.....39 feet.  
Depth of hold.....17 feet.  
Burden (British measurement).....806 tons.  
She carried her main battery of twenty-two long 18-pounders on the lower gun-deck, and six long nines on the quarter-deck and four long nines on the forecastle; a total of 34 guns; throwing in single broadside 333 pounds of metal as against the Richard's 247 pounds with her 18-pounders, and 213 pounds in the case of the Serapis.

Comparison with the previous description of the Richard will exhibit that the Serapis was a trifle smaller in general dimensions, though more heavily armed; but she had the additional advantage of being new, this being her first cruise, regular man-of-war built, and like all ships of the line of the navy, she was designed and sparred for smart sailing and quick working.

Her complement was 332, all hands; but the crew of the Serapis was all regular English man-of-war-men, perfectly homogeneous and completely disciplined and trained, which counted for a great deal when compared with the motley crew of the Richard, which at this time was also slightly inferior in numbers to that of the Serapis.

We have seen that the Richard, when she sailed from L'Orient, Aug. 14, had about 373, all hands; but by Sept. 23 this force had been considerably reduced. Second Lieut. Cutting, Lunt, had been captured with 18 men; a descent on the coast. His brother, Third Lieut. Henry Lunt, had been placed with 10 men in charge of a prize taken on the morning of Sept. 22. Four warrant officers and 18 men had been previously detached as prize crews. This left First Lieut. Dale and Fourth and Fifth Lieuts. Stack and Martyn and 37 other officers and men for duty on board the Richard when she bore up to the battle.

There was another element of disparity between the two ships more important than the difference in design, build or weight of metal. That was the fact that the Serapis was the crack ship of her class in the regular navy, and had been for more than a century had been an unbroken record of victory over all foes and whose morale thereby had risen to a point of exultant organ, while the Richard, half the battle at the first shot, while the Richard was a converted Indiaman, without definite rate; armed hap-hazard, manned at random; belonging to a navy

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pounds, being of the same 11 as the two which had burst, were also unsafe, and reminded him that they had all been converted for use in the French navy before being taken by the British at L'Orient, whereupon Dale told him to abandon them and report with his remaining men to the main battery.

This at once reduced the Richard to about the rate of a 32-gun, 12-pounder, frigate. Capt. Jones was, of course, shocked at the loss of his 18-pounder battery, on which he had so much depended, and after the renewed firing he decided to go on for some time he left the upper deck, where he had been working the ship, went below to the gun-deck and, said Lieut. Dale:

"Dick, his metal is too heavy for us at this kind of work. He will hammer us to pieces. We must close with him. We must get hold of him. Be ready at any time for closing!" (Account of the battle by Lieut. Lunt, 1783.)

## GETTING CLOSER TOGETHER.

Returning to the upper deck, Jones now began to wear his ship off the wind to close, gaining way as he brought the ship to the wind. He was now within 100 yards of the Serapis, and the significance of his antagonist's maneuver, edged the Serapis away to avoid him. But the Richard was not to be so easily fooled. The wind of the Serapis, blanketing her sails and causing her to lose way, while she herself continued to gain on her own.

Nathaniel Fanning, who had been the wheel himself during some part of this maneuver, Pearson realized perfectly that the time had come when the Richard's upper deck and tops all along convinced him that she would prove superior in boarding force. Beyond all this he realized the desperate nature of the situation. He was now within 100 yards of the Serapis, and the significance of his antagonist's maneuver, edged the Serapis away to avoid him. But the Richard was not to be so easily fooled. The wind of the Serapis, blanketing her sails and causing her to lose way, while she herself continued to gain on her own.

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with much worse wounds. But it is not for me to reflect on the behavior of my superior officer.

"When he is hamillated" was gone. Commodore Jones sprang among the shaking marines on the quarter deck.

## LIKE A LION AMONG CALVES.

"They responded instantly to him. In an instant they were filled with courage! The indomitable spirit, the unconquerable courage (be brave, hors de terre)!"—literally "bravery without end"—of the Commodore penetrated every soul, and every one who saw his example or heard his voice became as much a hero as himself!

"At that moment the fate of the contest was decided. Every man whose wounds permitted him to stand up pressed forward to the front of danger, and the Commodore had but to look at a man to make him brave! Such was the power of one heart that knew no fear! Such the influence of one soul that knew the meaning of no other word than conquest!"

[To be continued.]

## PICKET SHOTS.

From Alert Comrades Along the Whole Line.  
At Andersonville.

H. Bangham, Co. E, 123d Ohio, Barrington, Kan., writes: "I read 'Andersonville' with interest. I was in the prison from June to September, 1864. I was not without shelter or camping ground until the enlargement of the stockade; then I was located on the north side, detachment 294, if I remember aright. I found several of my home neighbors among the Chickamauga prisoners. John Lawson, of Taylorville, Mo., was one whom the writer mentions. When he died, Joe Thompson said he could hold out 30 days longer. James Sheppard, trying to cheer him, said: 'Oh, I can stand it 60 days longer. We will surely be released by that time.'"

"At the end of 30 days poor Joe asked Rufus Toole to pray with him, and bidding good-bye turned on his side and died without a struggle. When the 60th day arrived James Sheppard asked if there was any exchange news. When told there was none he exclaimed: 'I cannot stand it any longer.' He asked Rufus Toole to pray and sing with him, and bidding good-bye turned on his side and died without a struggle. When the 60th day arrived James Sheppard asked if there was any exchange news. When told there was none he exclaimed: 'I cannot stand it any longer.' He asked Rufus Toole to pray and sing with him, and bidding good-bye turned on his side and died without a struggle. When the 60th day arrived James Sheppard asked if there was any exchange news. When told there was none he exclaimed: 'I cannot stand it any longer.' He asked Rufus Toole to pray and sing with him, and bidding good-bye turned on his side and died without a struggle. 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